

: artist profile **christian maychack**

"I got to art pretty late, about 21," says sculptor Christian Maychack, somewhat abashedly. "I wanted to be a math teacher until then." But even once he became an artist, he took the long route to making sculpture. "I was really hardcore into printmaking. I went to printmaking conferences, I was really into the process. Finally, I just got fed up, I said 'I want to make art, I don't care if it's a print or a painting, just wherever I go with it.'" Eventually, the "paintings got thick and became objects, and then they made that leap off the wall."

In a way, Maychack's artworks are still in the process of navigating that evolutionary leap between wall and floor, between their assigned gallery 'display space' and the world inhabited by the viewer. His works are less polite, static objects than amorphous entities caught while undergoing transformation, often while secreted in the shadows. "I think it started at the first show I did, at Gregory Lind, curated by Laura Janku, called 'Sewn Together,' in 2003." At the time, Maychack was creating abstract, sewn forms. "I got interested in the viewer's space, how to activate a space that no one else would inhabit. The piece was on top of a wall and formed around it. It visually sliced the wall and took over the corner. From there, I really wanted to play with people's expectations of their space and how they interact with it. I got interested in surprise."

Over time, Maychack's interest in activating space got spliced together with his experience as an art installer in Yerba Buena Center, and other local galleries, and as the work developed, it took the form of strange mixed-media graftings, mutations, or tumors that seemed to spring organically from the gallery's own infrastructure. In *Uneasiness Is Twofold*, a brick column separating windows atop a wall seems to spin off in a jagged fractal trunk. *For the Empathy of Others* features a gloopy geometric growth hanging from the beams of a high wooden ceiling like some alien fungus out of "Star Trek." *From A Notion of Subtle Collapse* offers a choppy igloo nestled beneath a set of stairs; the piece seems to incorporate, mutate and extend the white metal railings of the stairway itself.

Unsurprisingly, Maychack says he is "influenced by science fiction a lot, and by readings in biology. Recently, I've been reading a lot about evolution."

Last fall, Maychack had a solo show at Jeff Bailey Gallery in New York in September and was also invited to be part of the 2006 California Biennial at the Orange County Museum of Art. "I quit my job and borrowed a lot of money so I could do that," he notes. For his contribution to the OCMA show, *From Here It Will Be Everything* (2006), Maychack replicated a sleek museum bench, one of many set around the halls, then slathered it with drippy white blobs, twisting it upwards at one end so it was barely functional and seemed to be pointing toward another gloopy accretion on a nearby wall.

"I'm interested in taking these highly structured things and making them seem as if they're broken down or collapsing on themselves, but growing at the same time... I don't think of them as menacing, though a lot of people do. I like that," he adds.

—GEORGE MELROD

Christian Maychack's newest work can be seen at Gregory Lind Gallery, at 49 Geary Street, in San Francisco, from May 22 to June 22, 2007



TOP: "FROM HERE IT WILL BE EVERYTHING," 2006
MAPLE, POLYSTYRENE FOAM AND MAGIC SCULPT, 35" x 50" x 30"

BOTTOM: "FROM A NOTION OF SUBTLE COLLAPSE," 2005
WOOD, HOT GLUE, WIRE, PLASTER, AND LATEX PAINT, 70" x 52" x 60"